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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Telephone Call from Representative Charles Diggs,
24 May 1978

1. I had a phone call from Congressman Diggs the morning of 24 May. I returned his call at 1240.

2. The Congressman had read the story in the morning Washington Post concerning my and David Aaron's approaches to Senator Clark regarding possible support to various activities in and around Angola. The Congressman wanted to remind me that the House International Relations Subcommittee on Africa, which he chaired, was also involved in these matters. He took umbrage at the fact that we had seen Senator Clark and not himself. He wanted to know what the nature of my approach to Senator Clark was; specifically, he was trying to find out if we were about to undertake a program of support to Savimbi.

3. I told the Congressman that I was sent to the Hill--to Senator Clark specifically because he was the author of the so-called Clark Amendment. We wanted to understand what that Clark Amendment was intended to mean. We could not consider all the alternatives available to the Administration in Africa today without being sure of the interpretation of the Clark Amendment. It was my position in discussions on this subject that the Clark Amendment prohibited any activity that could be considered support of guerrillas in Angola and for all time. I said I had gone to Senator Clark to see if this interpretation was correct, and he had said it was. I assured him I had not gone up with a specific plan to try to sell; that was not my job in any event because I was not a policy-maker.

4. The Congressman also complained that he had never had the CIA volunteer when they had information that would be of value to him and his subcommittee--he always had to call for it. I told him we would try to do better on that score and to keep him posted.

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STANSFIELD TURNER
Director

cc: Legislative Counsel

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Clark Fears Revived Role In Angola

By Walter Pincus and Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Staff Writers

Sen Dick Clark (D-Iowa) said yesterday, "It is increasingly clear that President Carter has made the decision to reinvolve the United States in the Angola civil war."

Clark based his accusation on what he termed Carter public statements about the desirability of repealing the so-called Clark amendment that precludes any U.S. aid to promote military or paramilitary operations in Angola.

Clark said that if Carter really does not want to reinvolve the United States in Angola, "he ought to say so."

White House press secretary Jody Powell said last night: "The president has not made any decision to take any action that would be contrary to the Clark amendment or any law and is not going to."

Carter "has never said publicly or privately that he thinks it ought to be repealed," Powell said of the Clark amendment.

Powell said that the administration is not trying "to rush pell mell into any entanglements," and that discussing laws that preclude actions "didn't necessarily mean the president wanted to take those actions."

It was learned yesterday that Carter's deputy national security adviser, David Aaron, and Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, called on Clark earlier this month to discuss the transfer of U.S. arms through third parties to Angolan and Ethiopian groups fighting Soviet- and Cuban-supported forces.

The purpose of this U.S. aid would be to tie down the Cubans in those two countries and make them reluctant to enter the guerrilla war in Rhodesia, those officials reportedly told Clark.

Turner is said to have shown Clark a plan outlining transfer of equipment through a third party to the United Front for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, which is conducting a guerrilla struggle against Angola's Marxist central government.

Clark reportedly told Turner such aid would be against U.S. law, but said he would study the idea. When they talked again a few days later, the Iowa senator strongly opposed the idea.

Turner later reported on Clark's attitude to a National Security Council meeting called to discuss possible aid to UNITA in Angola. According to a source, national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski "groaned" on hearing Turner's report.

Before Turner visited Clark, Brzezinski's deputy, Aaron, called on the senator to talk about possible indirect aid for Eritrean rebels fighting the Ethiopian army supported by Cuban troops and Soviet equipment. Aaron also mentioned possible new U.S. aid to Angola, but only vaguely, a source said.

Powell said last night that Aaron's visit was for "a general discussion about Africa," and that Aaron did not "present any proposal to Clark" for new U.S. aid.

Powell said that Turner had talked to Clark "about what was possible within the law," and "obviously used several examples."

Powell also said that Turner's mission was not "to run any proposal by Clark."

Reached by telephone last night, Clark said Senate rules forbid him from commenting on confidential briefings from administration officials.

Sources said the proposal to renew covert military aid to Angolan rebels was hotly contested by State Department officials. It was suggested that proponents of the assistance hoped to obtain Clark's acquiescence before a final security council recommendation was made to the president.

In a related development yesterday, Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) decided to challenge the administration's contention that congressional restrictions have tied the president's hands in Africa and made it difficult to deal with the challenges posed there by Soviet and Cuban intervention.

In remarks to be delivered on the Senate floor this week, McGovern will say the administration appears to be engaged in "a public relations venture." He implies that it is the work of "certain officials whose frustration at being unable to control complicated international events — and to establish an image as tough-fisted wielders of power — has compelled them to place the blame on Congress."

The Washington Post reported last Friday that the Carter administration had been working for two months on a plan to funnel arms and equipment through other countries to African guerrilla forces fighting Cuban and other Soviet-backed troops in Ethiopia and Angola.

WASHINGTON POST

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Apparently, that was the plan Turner presented to Clark earlier this month.

Clark's refusal to acquiesce preceded by several days the first public expressions of frustration by the administration about "restrictions" allegedly impinging on presidential freedom of maneuver in Africa.

The White House has now repeated those expressions of frustration several times, but has not yet asked for specific remedies.

Senate aides who spent Monday and yesterday studying all existing legislative restrictions on the administration's freedom of action in Africa concluded that there are only two substantial ones.

One is the Clark amendment, enacted in 1976, prohibiting involvement in Angola. The second is the so-called "Brooke amendment" prohibiting aid to the government of Ethiopia.

Since the government of Ethiopia is now avowedly hostile to the United States and is being actively supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba, the Senate aides concluded that the only operative restriction now in force is the Clark amendment on Angola.

In a May 4 press conference, Carter said, "We have no intention to intercede in any war in Angola." A few days after that Turner called on Clark to outline the plan for transferring arms to Angolan UNITA rebels.

White House officials noted yesterday that Carter has never publicly mentioned the Clark amendment. In remarks to newspaper editors Friday, Carter referred to "very tight constraint from laws that control my action in Africa."

A list of congressional restraints issued by the State Department over the weekend did not list any other than the Clark and Brooke amendments as formally precluding presidential action in Africa without any escape clause.

Other legislative restraints can be overridden if the president declares the U.S. national interest is involved—or words to that effect—before taking certain kinds of action.

One such restriction prohibits military or paramilitary operations in Zaire unless the president determines

that it is in this country's national security interest. Carter made such a determination last week in authorizing participation in rescue operations in Zaire.

McGovern would invite the administration to submit legislative proposals if it had specific ones in mind.

McGovern said the list of "restrictions on presidential authority" released by the State Department "consisted of nothing more than a compilation of those provisions of foreign aid law which establish certain prohibitions or limitations" on U.S. aid, which he called typical of foreign aid law.

Though McGovern is often outside the mainstream of Senate opinion, well-placed Senate sources said yesterday that his views on this issue seem consistent with many members'.

The majority leader, Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), has denied that Congress has "tied the president's hands" in Africa.